

2023 ECONOMIC REPORT

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION



The South Central Region is comprised of 12 counties in the center of the southern portion of Missouri. The region is home to several cities including West Plains and Poplar Bluff.

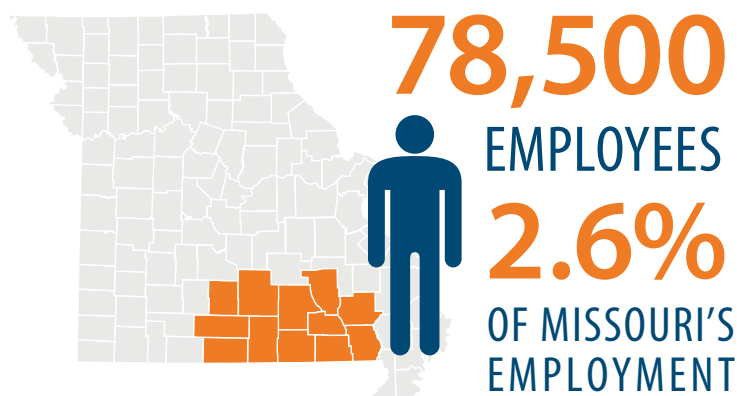
The South Central Region workforce has more than 78,500 employees, making up 2.6 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2022, 52.3 percent of the workforce was female and 47.7 percent was male, compared to Missouri's overall 48.9 percent female and 51.1 percent male. The regional average unemployment rate in 2022 was 3.0 percent.

The workforce is getting older in the South Central Region, a trend continuing throughout Missouri and the U.S. In 2022, 23.8 percent of the workforce was age 55 or older, up from 20 percent a decade earlier.

For the region, 6.8 percent of the workforce was non-white and 2.7 percent was Hispanic or Latino. This compares to the state averages of 18.1 percent non-white and 4.9 percent Hispanic or Latino.

In the South Central Region, 2.2 percent of the region's population (ages 18 to 64) speaks a language other than English at home. By comparison, Missouri was at 7.1 percent and the U.S. was at 23.7 percent.

The South Central Region has a higher percentage of the population with a disability compared to the state and the nation. For the South Central Region, 21.7 percent of the population has a disability compared to 12.3 percent in Missouri and 10.3 percent in the U.S.



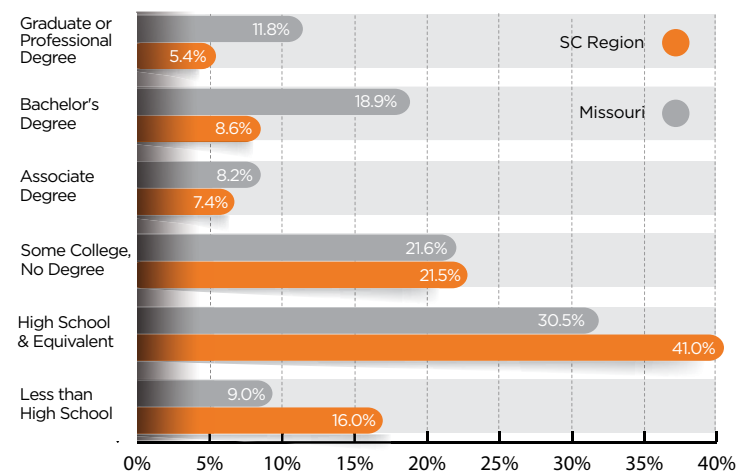
Workforce Demographics

	SC Region	Missouri	Nationwide
Average Monthly Employment in 2022	78,525	2,984,340	158,291,000
Average Unemployment Rate in 2022	3.0%	2.5%	3.6%
Male	47.7%	51.1%	51.5%
Female	52.3%	48.9%	48.5%
Non-White	6.8%	18.1%	24.2%
Hispanic or Latino	2.7%	4.9%	17.4%
Ages 55 and Older	23.8%	22.5%	22.8%
With Disabilities (Ages 18-64)	21.7%	12.3%	10.3%
Below Poverty Levels (Ages 18-64)	20.1%	12.5%	11.7%
Language other than English (Ages 18-64)	2.2%	7.1%	23.7%
Education of Associate Degree or Higher	21.4%	38.9%	42.4%
Veterans (Age 18-64)	7.5%	4.9%	4.5%

SOURCES: CENSUS ACS 2021-5YR EST.; LEHD 2ND QUARTER; BLS LAUS 2022

Educational attainment rates for the South Central Region are lower than those of the state for those with bachelor's or advanced degrees. Twenty-one percent of the region's population, age 25 and older, has an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree compared to 39 percent for the state, and about 42 percent for the nation. About 16.0 percent of the region's population of age 25 and older has less than high school education.

Educational Attainment



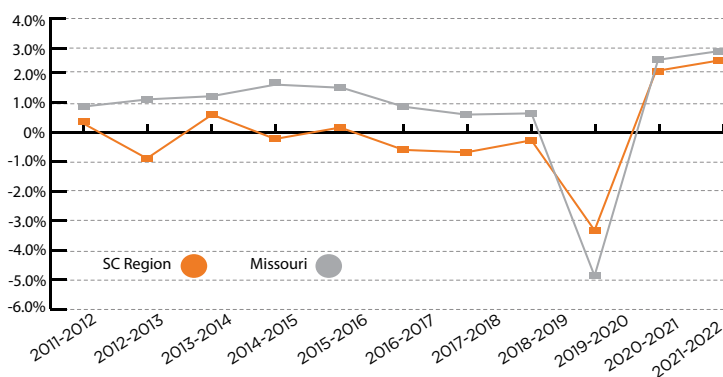
SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 2021 5-YEAR ESTIMATES

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The South Central Region averaged over 59,800 jobs in 2022. The region gained 1,427 jobs, an increase of 2.4 percent from 2021 to 2022. From 2018 to 2022, the South Central Region averaged a 0.2 percent annual growth rate for an overall gain of 0.9 percent. During that same period (2018-2022) Missouri had the same compound annual employment gain of 0.2 percent for an overall gain of 0.9 percent.

South Central Employment Annual Growth Rate



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QCEW

Health Care and Social Assistance continues to be one of the largest employing industries in the region with over 11,700 jobs in 2022 and a -0.6 percent compound annual growth rate since 2018. *Manufacturing* is the second largest industry in the area with over 8,800 jobs. It gained 351 jobs since 2018. The *Retail Trade* and *Accommodation and Food Services* industries also gained employment of 658 and 661 jobs, respectively, since 2018.

Health Care and Social Assistance (-378) and *Public Administration* (-149) are the industry sectors that lost jobs compared to 2018 employment levels.

South Central Region Top Employing Industries

Industry	Employment 2018	Employment 2022	Net Change	2018-2022 Empl. CAGR	2021 Annual Wages
Health Care & Social Assistance	12,094	11,716	-378	-0.6%	\$37,584
Manufacturing	8,545	8,896	351	0.8%	\$44,700
Retail Trade	7,324	7,982	658	1.7%	\$31,884
Accommodation & Food Services	4,991	5,652	661	2.5%	\$19,224
Educational Services	5,248	5,265	17	0.1%	\$34,920
Public Administration	3,186	3,037	-149	-1.0%	\$37,692
Wholesale Trade	1,829	1,959	130	1.4%	\$55,260
Construction	1,836	1,924	88	0.9%	\$43,728
Finance & Insurance	1,704	1,709	5	0.1%	\$49,008
Prof., Scientific, & Technical Services	1,443	1,675	232	3.0%	\$64,680
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	1,611	1,615	4	0.0%	\$28,716
Transportation & Warehousing	1,393	1,458	65	0.9%	\$42,852

SOURCE: LEHD QWI, 2018-2022 QUARTER 3 DATA

LOCATION QUOTIENT

To understand the major industries within a region, an analysis of industry concentration or clustering can be useful. The Location Quotient (LQ) describes the concentration of an industry in a geographic region, in relation to the nation, with 1.0 being the national average. Industries with higher than 1.0 LQ indicate a concentration.

The South Central Region has higher concentrations in *Wood Product Manufacturing*; *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers*; *Machinery Manufacturing*; and *Forestry and Logging*.



HIGHEST 2022
LQ 9.1

WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING

2022 South Central Region Location Quotients

Industry	Employment	Location Quotient
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,557	9.1
Gasoline Stations & Fuel Dealers	1,450	3.5
Machinery Manufacturing	1,364	3.1
Forestry & Logging	50	2.5
Building Material & Supplies Dealers	1,012	1.8
General Merchandise Retailers	2,209	1.7
Social Assistance	2,770	1.7
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	1,964	1.6
Animal Production & Aquaculture	163	1.5
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	1,086	1.4
Truck Transportation	790	1.3
Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	1,176	1.1

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES 2022

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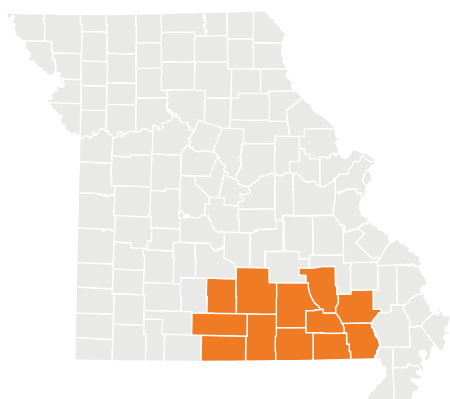
Projected growth in industry helps to identify future employment needs for an area. Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the South Central Region from 2020-2030 will be in the *Food Services and Drinking Places; Social Assistance; Machinery Manufacturing; Accommodation, including Hotels and Motels; and Hospitals* industries.

South Central Region Largest Growth Industries 2020-2030

Industry	Employment		Change	
	2020 Estimated	2030 Projected	2020-2030 Numeric	Percent
Food Services & Drinking Places	4,166	4,888	722	17.3%
Social Assistance	3,906	4,438	532	13.6%
Machinery Manufacturing	1,537	1,880	343	22.3%
Accommodation, including Hotels & Motels	707	926	219	31.0%
Hospitals	2,155	2,346	191	8.9%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,070	1,252	182	17.0%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1,298	1,450	152	11.7%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	865	960	95	11.0%
Repair & Maintenance	519	604	85	16.4%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	852	930	78	9.2%

SOURCES: MERIC INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

PROJECTED GROWTH BY INDUSTRY HELPS TO IDENTIFY FUTURE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS FOR AN AREA.



OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

MERIC produces occupational projections that estimates labor demand over a 10-year period. MERIC categorizes these occupations using its Now-Next-Later method to help job seekers understand the training, education, and experience requirements for various occupations.

Now jobs typically require short-term on-the-job training, little to no experience, and/or a high school diploma. **Now** occupations with the most projected openings are *Home Health and Personal Care Aides; Cashiers; and Fast Food and Counter Workers. Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Waiters and Waitresses* are projected to be the fastest growing **Now** occupations over the next decade.

Next jobs typically require a non-degree certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship, some experience, or moderate- to long-term training. *Assemblers and Fabricators; Cooks; and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers* are projected to have the most openings for the **Next** category of occupations. *Cooks; First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers; and Maintenance and Repair Workers* are the fastest growing **Next** occupations.

Later jobs typically require a bachelor's degree or higher. For **Later** occupations, *General and Operations Managers; Registered Nurses; and Substitute Teachers* are projected to have the most openings. *General and Operations; Substitute Teachers; and Registered Nurses* are the fastest growing **Later** occupations.




South Central Region Fastest Growing Occupations



NOTE: OCCUPATIONS WITH ANNUAL TOTAL OPENINGS OF LESS THAN 50 ARE OMITTED
SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

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South Central Region Long-Term Occupational Projections by Top Openings




Occupation	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Growth Openings	Exits	Transfers	Total Openings	Median Wages
 NOW							
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	3,712	4,338	63	258	228	549	\$23,358
Cashiers	3,114	2,988	-13	260	292	539	\$21,668
Fast Food & Counter Workers	1,485	1,636	15	151	165	331	\$20,859
Retail Salespersons	1,251	1,290	4	71	105	180	\$24,652
Office Clerks, General	1,637	1,566	-7	87	95	175	\$27,456
 NEXT							
Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	1,884	2,012	13	74	139	226	\$30,717
Cooks, Restaurant	495	707	21	35	51	107	\$20,792
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	813	797	-2	33	55	86	\$36,061
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	660	645	-2	23	45	66	\$34,684
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	583	632	5	21	35	61	\$33,025
 LATER							
General & Operations Managers	1,026	1,159	13	22	68	103	\$59,835
Registered Nurses	1,675	1,715	4	45	43	92	\$59,639
Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	735	756	2	44	40	86	\$26,032
Middle Schl Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	1,120	1,099	-2	34	44	76	\$46,010
Accountants & Auditors	444	483	4	13	28	45	\$52,621

SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS

Job postings are an indicator of demand and opportunities in an area, and can assist individuals seeking job opportunities in current in-demand occupations. According to information based on online job posting data collected and aggregated by Lightcast™ for the South Central Region, jobs like *Registered Nurses*; *Home Health and Personal Care Aides*; *Retail Salespersons*; and *Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers* had a high number of job postings in the region during the last year.

South Central Region Top Five Online Job Postings in Now-Next-Later Classification

Occupation Title	Online Job Postings
 NOW	
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	340
Retail Salespersons	300
Stockers & Order Fillers	130
Customer Service Representatives	130
Fast Food & Counter Workers	120
 NEXT	
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	280
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	270
Merchandise Displayers & Window Trimmers	230
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	170
Nursing Assistants	140
 LATER	
Registered Nurses	940
Physicians, All Other	220
General Internal Medicine Physicians	150
Medical and Health Services Managers	140
Occupational Therapists	100

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST™, ONLINE JOB ADS FROM MAY 1, 2022 - APRIL 30, 2023

This report was prepared by the staff of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) as part of the Missouri Workforce Report. All data in this report was current at the time of publication and is subject to revision. Additional details on data sources can be found in the full report. This workforce solution was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The solution was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership.